

Marable

From Page A4

draising and the development of local leaders as potential candidates. The overwhelming majority of black women in politics are Democrats, but the Congress has attracted bipartisan support.

National leaders include liberal Democrat Shirley Chisholm, the national chair of the Congress; Vice Chair C. Delores Tucker, the leader of the Democratic Party's Black Caucus; and conservative Republican businesswoman Gloria Tootie, second vice chair.

As Philadelphia City Councilwoman Augusta Clarke observed: "We're in existence because we are for the political power of black women -- Democrats, Republicans and independents; our uniqueness is that this group is diverse and independent and we speak for all women."

The rising clout of black women in the electoral arena is apparent from the 1984 election statistics. Nearly 70 percent of all black women were registered, compared to only 62.2 percent four years before. Their electoral turnout rate of 59.2 percent was significantly higher than their 52.8 percent figure of 1980.

The election of more black women can only promote the political and economic interests of the national black community as a whole. But specific organizing efforts which target the nonelectoral concerns of low-income and working-class women -- from health care to public housing -- must also be initiated and led by women as well.

The battle against racial and gender inequality requires mass mobilization, demonstrations and neighborhood-level formations, as well as electoral reforms.

Dr. Manning Marable is a syndicated columnist who teaches political sociology at Colgate University.

Hyman

From Page A4

It is unbelievable that today's teachers want to be paid for after-school activities. You mean no more of Miss Coleman's class plays? You mean no more Saturday bake sales to raise money for basketball uniforms? You mean no more door-to-door solicitations for gas money for the bus for the traveling football games? You're kidding!

It is ironic that starting teachers today make more a year than Miss Helen Coleman made in her 40 years of teaching. This includes the increments and North Carolina's generous plan to equalize the pay of black and white teachers. A half-century or less ago, the Helen Colemans of America taught, harassed, loved and made their students learn. Oh, yes, they went upside some heads. But one thing is for sure: They produced generations of learners over whose backs today's bright students walked.

The thousands of accomplished survivors of the Helen Colemans remember them with deepest love; with sincerest gratitude. They think of them with pleasure and misty eyes. Their children and grandchildren have known about the Helen Colemans; so will their children and their children's children. It will always be "To Miss Helen Coleman with love," even if their ears still ring a little.

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